



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THREE MEXICAN NATIONALS SENTENCED FOR TRANSPORTING AND
HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that U.S. District Judge James R. Nowlin sentenced 21-year-olds Erik Angeles-Mendoza and Felipe Ceron-Espinoza to 108 months in federal prison and 22-year-old Daniel Angeles-Mendoza to 78 months for their role in an alien smuggling organization.

On July 17, 2003, Austin Police officers responded to a "911" call from a Honduran man who claimed that his wife was being held against her will at an Austin residence. At the residence, police discovered a Hispanic male walking around the house carrying a shotgun. Upon entering the house, the officers found 29 individuals from Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, who claimed they were being smuggled into the country illegally for between \$1,500 - \$1,800.

Last year, the three defendants, all of whom are Mexican citizens illegally in the United States, pled guilty to conspiracy to transport and harbor undocumented aliens and possession of a firearm by an illegal alien.

"Today's sentences should put on notice those who deal in human cargo that there will be harsh punishment for their crimes. Those who wish to enter our country illegally should realize that when they put their hopes in the hands of coyotes and immigrant smugglers they are very possibly signing their death warrants. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas takes this problem very seriously and is committed to aggressively prosecuting these criminals," stated **United States Attorney Johnny Sutton**.

This case was being investigated by the Anti-Smuggling Unit of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Austin Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Gerald Carruth prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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